

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

City Council Meeting of April 6, 2020

Councilmembers –

Your agenda for Monday night is as follows:

NOTE: the April 6, 2020 City Council meeting will be held remotely utilizing video conferencing technology in compliance with Stay Home, Stay Safe requirements restricting public gatherings, including civic activities. However, this is still an open public meeting as defined by the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA). The City will be using Microsoft Teams to livestream the council meeting. Members of the public do not need to download anything to view the proceedings. Click on this [link](#) to join the live event at 6pm Monday, April 6th.

Item A, Public Comment (CANCELLED): In compliance with Stay Home, Stay Safe restrictions, and consistent with new guidelines established for public meetings through the OPMA, public comment has been cancelled until further notice. However, the public may still submit comments by emailing City Clerk Susan Duncan at susanduncan@cityofferndale.org. Comments received prior to 5pm Monday, April 6th will be included in the meeting record.

Item B, Consent Agenda, including approval of March 16, 2020 Council meeting minutes, authorization of March 20, 2020 payroll.

Item C, Discussion, COVID-19 Response: City Staff have prepared a summary of City actions taken to date in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The scope of these actions is broad, involving both internal and external actions, coordination, and programs. Each department head will describe the actions their department has taken thus far.

Item D, Emergency Funding – Whatcom County: The Ferndale City Council and all other local governments are asked to begin discussions to support funding of Whatcom Unified Command. Unified Command is an authority structure described by the Incident Command System (ICS), which itself is a component of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) that allows individuals from different jurisdictions or agencies to share command during an emergency situation. Unified Command and the various branches within the command are tasked with the primary response and planning for the emergency.

It has been estimated that Unified Command will require up to \$5 million or more in funding to support its efforts through the crisis. These efforts may include but are not limited to the procurement of Personal Protective Equipment, emergency supplies, physical locations for emergency hospitals or centers (should they become necessary), food, bedding, medications, and all manner of other expenditures necessary to fight this fight.

Assuming a pro-rata share of costs based on population, Ferndale could be expected to contribute between \$300,000 and \$500,000. Whatcom County and the City of Bellingham have each contributed \$250,000, with additional funding (via loans) provided through Whatcom County's EDI fund. Ferndale's pro-rata share of \$250,000 would be approximately \$40,000 as an initial contribution, and the City Council may decide to allocate this or another amount as soon as April 20th, via a budget amendment.

The City will continue to work with Unified Command to develop more-specific cost and expenditure estimates. Reimbursement for these contributions is possible/likely – but the timing and extent of a reimbursement is uncertain.

Item E-G: Mayor, Council and Department Reports.

Final Thoughts.

Councilmembers -

And suddenly, the world changed. Over the last month, we have all experienced a sudden and dramatic shift in our daily lives. Uncertainty, fear. Compassion, love. Denial, acceptance. A desire to push back, a drive to make things better.

At the City, we have taken the steps necessary to essentially recreate our entire work structures and systems for the purpose of maintaining full functionality. All City staff have contributed to this effort, and their positive attitudes, can-do spirit, and creativity do not go unnoticed.

We see this in our community, as first responders and front-line personnel continue to do their jobs, even at heightened risk. As dozens of community volunteers help those who are less fortunate or at increased risk. As neighbors check in on neighbors. As businesses rise to the occasion. And as so many other businesses and individuals make the necessary decision to close, at least temporarily.

Now is not the time to tempt fate. It is not the time to take risks, because the risks that are taken may not be to you, but to others. This week, we made the difficult decision to delay the start of the Thornton Street Extension project, as well as other projects that cannot be considered essential. There will always be arguments that a project or initiative is important, be it a City project, a business decision, or something more personal – Thornton certainly fits that description, and the community has waited forty years for this project to start. But delaying this project was the right thing to do.

We will get back to work, and be assured that at the City we will be pulling every lever at our disposal to make sure that Ferndale’s ascendancy continues after this temporary pause. This is the greatest global challenge we have yet faced, but there is nothing that we cannot overcome, together.

Stay Safe. Stay at Home. Be smart. This too shall pass.

See you Monday - Jori